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Dear State Employee:

Holiday greetings! I am writing regarding the hundreds of Washington State employees that have been mobilized in National Guard and Reserve components. During this holiday season, I hope that you will take a moment to celebrate the great work you are doing for the citizens of our state and reflect on the sacrifices your colleagues in the Guard and Reserve are making on behalf of all of us. As you do, please consider a gesture of kindness that will bring them and their families' greater peace of mind.

Each of these brave men and women are assured job restoration under state and federal law. Their households, however, suffer a significant loss of both income and family medical, dental, and life insurance benefits when activated for military service. Many of these civic-patriots are deployed for more than a year, and if their eligibility for state medical insurance is not maintained, access to primary health care providers is terminated and other hardships may ensue.


The good news is that their family medical and insurance coverage can be maintained if they are in a paid leave status for as little as eight hours during each month. Therefore, through your donation of sick, annual, or personal holiday leave you will enable families of mobilized reserve component members to preserve vitally important insurance benefits and help ease their stress over financial concerns.

Existing state agency and board and commission policies permit you to donate leave to a specific recipient or to an unnamed eligible recipient within your agency. The Washington Military Department and Department of Personnel also are developing a statewide Military Shared Leave Pool system. This will facilitate matching leave donors with eligible recipients in other agencies.

Donating your leave is a wonderful way to express your support for Washington's Guard and Reserve employees. I encourage you to contact your agency's human resource representative or designated shared leave coordinator for more information. They will be happy to explain the process to you and answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for doing your part. Please accept my best wishes for peace and joy during this holiday season.

Sincerely,

  
Gary Locke  
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